



# Back to Four Corners

A STORY OF POLITICS IN 1924

By CYRENUS COLE

## "A GOVERNMENT OF COMMON SENSE"

"We are likely to hear a great deal of discussion about liberal thought and progressive action. It is well for the country to have liberality in thought and progress in action, but its greatest asset is common sense.

"The people know the difference between pretense and reality. They want to be told the truth. They want to be trusted. They want a chance to work out their own material and spiritual salvation.

"The people want a government of common sense." — *Hon. Calvin Coolidge*, in speech of Acceptance.

## "A CAMPAIGN OF BRASS TACKS"

"This campaign is a campaign of domestic issues. . . .

"Political issues in the United States have become too serious to trifle with, and the citizens realize it.

"The discussion of facts and truth is demanded. . . .

"This is a campaign of brass-tacks — not bombast." — *Hon. Chas. G. Dawes*, in speech of Acceptance.


CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA  
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## PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS FROM CALVIN COOLIDGE'S RECENT SPEECHES

### To Save America

"The time for Americans to range themselves firmly, squarely, and uncompromisingly behind American ideals is now.

"The great body of our people have an abiding faith in their own country. The time has come when they should supplement that faith with action.

"The question is whether America will allow itself to be degraded into a communistic and socialistic state, or whether it will remain American.

"Those who want to continue to enjoy the high estate of American citizenship will resist all attempts to encroach upon their liberties by encroaching upon the power of the courts.

"The time to stop those who would loosen and weaken the fabric of our government is before they begin."

### To Help Save the World

"To continue to be independent we must continue to be wholeheartedly American. . . . We cannot become the partisans of one nation or the opponents of another.

"The course of our country in recent years has been an example of these principles. We are still pursuing that course. It has been a practical course and it has secured practical results. One of the most important results is found in the disarmament treaties, which have saved our own country to date about three hundred millions of dollars, and likewise relieved other nations.

"Another important result has been the adoption of the Dawes plan for the settlement of reparations.

"The effect these two results will have in averting war and promoting peace cannot possibly be overestimated. They stand out as great monuments, truly directing the course of men along the way to more civilization, more enlightenment, and more righteousness.

"They appear to me properly to mark the end of the old order and the beginning of a new era." © CL A 800976

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CYRENUS COLE

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# BACK TO FOUR CORNERS

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## CHAPTER I

### WATSON COMES WEST AGAIN

"Here is good news, Dad, Watson is coming out to make us another visit—he's coming direct from the great political conventions and notifications to tell us all about them."

"Good for Watson," said the father.

"Good for all of us," said the son.

The father and the son speaking in this dialogue are Mark Miller, Sr., and Mark Miller, Jr. The father is a retired farmer living in the town of Storm Lake, Iowa, and the son is living on the old home farm at what is called Four Corners, a pretty cross-roads not far from the lake town.

Clarence Watson is a Washington newspaper man, with whom Mark Miller, Jr., became acquainted in France, while they were both serving in the World War, and their friendship was cemented in Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, where they both underwent repairs.\*

"Is Dorothy coming with him?" asked Mrs. Miller, Sr., joining in the conversation.

"Yes, he is bringing his wife and both children," replied the son, re-reading the letter.

"That will be nice for Mary and for little Mary."

Mary, it may be explained, is the wife of Mark Miller, Jr., and "little Mary" is their daughter, known as Mary, Jr. Young Miller met his future wife in the Washington hospital, where she served as a nurse. Dorothy is Mary's cousin. She was a "war widow," with one child, Dorothy, Jr., so called, when Clarence Watson met her and was married with her during a previous visit in Iowa.

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\* The Millers and the Watsons were the principal characters in a political story, entitled *From Four Corners to Washington*, published in 1920, and in a second story, published in 1922, entitled, *From Washington to Four Corners*. In these booklets the issues of the political campaigns of 1920 and 1922 were set forth and discussed as will be the issues of this campaign of 1924 in this. In these booklets the story form is employed to add human interest, but the facts and figures used are all officially correct.



"From what Watson writes us," said the son to his mother, "Dorothy, Jr., must be quite the smartest little girl in Washington, and as for the new baby, whom they call Clarence, Jr., although only past his first year, he must be as wise and talkative as his father, judging him by what his fond father writes about him."

"They're all smart enough," remarked the father; "and may I suggest that while you are so busy still on the farm, they stay with us here in town — we can drive them out every day so that you will get to see plenty of them."

"Yes, do let them stay with us," added the mother. "We have plenty of room for them, and then Mary will not be bothered with a house full."

"With threshing coming on," suggested the father.

"Bothered, nothing," said the Lieutenant — the son is still called Lieutenant, habitually — "we both want to be bothered that way. We will want all four of them with us and that all the time, threshing or no threshing."

"But there are a lot of things I want to talk over with Watson," insisted the father, "and I am thinking I can't do it, with him on the farm while I am here."

"But I want to hear him talk, too," replied the Lieutenant, "and it is more convenient for you to spend your time on the farm than for me to be in town. I want to hear all that Watson can tell us about what has been going on in the nation — he knows the whole game of politics."

"And he knows how to tell the truth about things," said the father. "That's what we want now, 'brass-tacks — and not bombast,' as Mr. Dawes puts it."

"Well, if you want to hear the truth told by a man who is not afraid to tell it, you'll have to come out to the farm, for that is where the Watsons, the whole kit and crew of them, will be found, and I hope they can stay with us a month. And, besides, I'm sure they want to be out on the farm. They have seen enough of towns."

"All right, have your way about it," said the father. "But you will find you have me on your hands most of the time during their visit."

"And to have you with us, and mother too," said the Lieutenant, "is always the greatest pleasure we have on the old farm. Without you dropping in on us would be for us like dropping out of the world."

## CHAPTER II

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE WATSONS

Early the next morning all the Millers, the father and mother, the Lieutenant and Mary, Sr., and Mary, Jr., were at the railroad station to meet all the Watsons. It was a reunion extraordinary.

"We are delighted!" shouted the Lieutenant.

"Bully, old pal," said Watson, beaming.

What the women and children said and did, must be left to the imagination.

They all had breakfast at the Miller town house, a pretty cottage overlooking the fine little lake.

After the breakfast the women chatted in the house, while the children chattered on the lawn.

But the men, sitting on the porch, were immediately immersed in politics.

"The conventions," said Watson, "well, they are now old stories. We have since had the ratifications and notifications which have brought things up to date. But it is not too old to say of the Cleveland republican convention that it was to me the most notable American gathering I have ever attended. It was so typically American. Many times I walked up and down the center aisle of that magnificent convention hall just to see the people who were there, men and women, and every time I did so I felt a new pride in the manhood and the womanhood of America as expressed in that gathering."

"But what about the New York gathering of democrats?" asked the Lieutenant. "You were there too?"

"Well, it was representative too," said Watson. "It was typical in another way. It was the expression of the contentions and confusions that have come into part of our American politics. The democrats had to fight it out among themselves and as you know it was a fierce fight and a prolonged one. They tried to get together and failing to do that entirely, they named two men as far apart as are the two poles of the earth."

"Coolidge and Dawes are certainly a better matched team, as we farmers say," said Mr. Miller, "than Davis and Bryan — how they are going to keep them in the harness together puzzles me."

"It is puzzling them too," said Watson. "So far Mr. Davis has made the most concessions. Naturally a conservative, he is trying to talk like a radical, and the opinion is general that he is not doing it very well. He is losing himself without finding the other fellow."

But that is their affair. As a republican I feel that Coolidge and Dawes make one of the best balanced tickets that the republican party has presented to the people since its organization."

"It strikes us all," said Mr. Miller, "as a real American ticket."

"They are both men in the prime of life," added Watson. "Both are admirably equipped for the public service. They are men who have already made records in the affairs of the nation. Their views are known. They are sound and sane and have the confidence of the people as a whole and that without regard to party. Their election will constitute a distinct new era in American politics."

"It won't be all political either," said Mr. Miller.

"It will not be ordinary politics at all," said Watson. "It will be good and orderly government, the kind which has made America great. And it will be prosperity, work, business, going ahead again. The country is ready for such a new regime. It is ready for a great revival of prosperity and what Mr. Coolidge in his speech of acceptance has just termed so happily, common sense."

"If the people can only see it in that light," said Mr. Miller, "how fortunate it will be for all."

"They are beginning to see it in that light," Watson assured him. "The reports that are coming from all parts of the country indicate the return to common sense, and I am going to predict a big victory for Coolidge and Dawes and I do it right now and here. The people are thinking along such lines and their hopes are set on it. There has been some confused thinking and there is still some confusion. But before the November elections they will have come to the right conclusions."

"They generally have come through all right, after thinking it over," admitted Mr. Miller.

"This is one of the super years," said Watson. "America is on trial. I believe the people will be minded to set their national house in order and with Coolidge and Dawes to go ahead like Americans. They are going to do it."

### CHAPTER III

#### THEY TALK ABOUT THE LAST CONGRESS

Shortly after the first breakfast, loaded in two automobiles, the Millers and Watsons motored to the farm at Four Corners.

"What puzzled me most two years ago when I was here," said



Watson as they approached the place, "was that Four Corners was just a place where two roads cross."

"Naturally, that makes four corners," said the Lieutenant. "We live in one of the corners, and the others are empty, as you see, except for good crops."

"What I want our neighbors to do," said Mary, "is to build their homes in those empty corners and then we would have a sort of community life here in the country."

"And then with paved roads," said Watson, "you would have a sort of rural paradise here in Iowa. My! look at this country," he added. "How beautiful it is for sore eyes from the cities! What is so good to look at must be good to live in!"

"But we can not live in it by looking at it," the Lieutenant warned him. "We have to work in it and after we have worked we must have prices for our products for we have to pay our bills and our taxes. That is where our problems begin nowadays."

"I know it," admitted Watson, "and before I return I want to get your viewpoint here as well as give you our viewpoint. When I go back to Washington I want to know more about everything than some writing men do."

When they had looked things over on the farm and were seated under the trees, Mr. Miller quickly again turned the talk to things political. "Tell me," he said, "what was the matter in the last session of the congress? Why did they not do more and agree better with the president — out here we thought it a do-nothing congress."

"You thought of it that way," replied Watson, "because you did not understand fully the internal situation there. You assumed, first of all, that we had a republican congress and that it ought to have worked with President Coolidge."

"Well, wasn't it republican?" asked Mr. Miller.

"Not quite," said Watson, smiling. "In the house the republicans had nominally 225 members, which is a majority of the 435 members making up that body. But of these hardly as many as 208 were really and fully republicans. The others were called 'insurgents,' while the democrats had about 207, nearly all democratic enough to act with their own party all the time."

"And the twenty 'insurgents,' as you call them, who were they and why didn't they act with their party?" asked Mr. Miller.

"Eleven of them were from Wisconsin, including Victor Berger, who generally voted with them. Berger is the lone real socialist in the house. Acting with these Wisconsin, or La Follette 'repub-

licans,' as they were sometimes called, were seven or eight from other states. In the senate the situation was of a like kind. Nominally, the republicans had a majority of about three, but there were always more than three who were ready to leave their party. They were called, sometimes, the La Follette senators."

;"These men in both the house and senate played between the lines," suggested the Lieutenant.

"That is exactly what they did," said Watson. "The result was that the republicans who were supposed to be and who were assumed to be in control of the congress, could not carry out their policies. On every vital question they had to compromise with the insurgents. If they had not done that the insurgents would have acted with the democrats, and that would have been worse."

"And that worried President Coolidge?" asked Mr. Miller.

"At least the president could not get the support he ought to have had in congress," said Watson. "But the republicans in congress were not to blame. The people were to blame. In the last elections they did not elect enough republicans of the real and dependable kind to carry out the programs and promises made in the name of the party. That is why you thought of it as a do-nothing congress and one that would not coöperate with the republican administration."

"I never understood the mix-up," admitted Mr. Miller.

"It is very easy to understand when you know the facts," said Watson. "It was a mix-up. Sometimes it looked like a hopeless one. But, on the whole, the republicans in congress made a fairly good ending. They got through even a fairly good tax bill. They made the best out of many bad situations."

"But if we are going to elect Coolidge and Dawes, as I believe we will, then we ought to give them a real republican congress back of them," said Mr. Miller.

"That's what ought to be done," said Watson. "I hope that the congress to be elected in November will be either one thing or the other, either republican or democratic. I never again want to see a group of so-called insurgents holding the balance of power between the two parties. You can never have good results in national legislation with a handful of men playing with either party, holding the balance of power. So long as you have that you will have sectional and factional trading instead of national legislation."

"Instead of blaming congress we ought occasionally to blame ourselves, you think?" asked Mr. Miller.



"In congress you get what you elect," said Watson. "If you elect only 208 republicans and it takes 218 to make a majority in the house you can not look for republican results and policies. The same is true in the senate. There it takes 49 to make a majority and at the present time you do not have that many real republicans in that august body."

"We must try to do better," said the Lieutenant.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE "CLUB" MEETS IN THE GARAGE

One morning, while the Lieutenant was very busy on the farm, Watson motored to town where Mr. Miller conducted him to the garage over which a big, jovial man named Jerry Jones presided as proprietor. It was a meeting place for what Jerry called "a gang of loafers," many of them retired farmers living in town. There they discussed men and measures with the seriousness of a miniature congress.

The "gang" was all there, for they had been told by Mr. Miller of Watson's coming. Watson was glad to renew the acquaintances he had made two years before.

They discussed first of all the rise in farm prices which was under full way.

"It's a trick of Wall street to make us feel better out here and vote right," said the very thin and very cynical member.

"Very likely," said Watson, smiling. "Wall street is just that sort of an institution. They are going to empty their fabled vaults to pay you a billion dollars more for your products. They must be philanthropists as well as politicians."

"Well, if they're willing to pay it," said a fat, chubby little member, "let's take it. We need it. If Wall street is doing it, they are doing more for the people than I ever heard of them politicians doing. All they ever seem to do for us is to talk, once in four years."

"But seriously," said Watson, "of course you all know that Wall street is not doing it. It's that old something that has been called the law of supply and demand. With bad weather almost the world over the crops are not promising well and suddenly there has come over us the fear we will not have enough of anything and so those who want food products, or deal in them, are bidding them up."

"It sort of leaves the politicians strung up," suggested Jerry Jones himself, pausing in his work.

"I'm wishing no one ill," remarked the thin cynic, "but we might do worse than keep them strung up, and get down to common sense."

"You must be a Coolidge man, my friend," said Watson, "for he has just adopted that as one of his slogans. He wants the country to get back to common sense."

"I got the idea from his speech of acceptance," confessed the thin man. "I approved it as soon as I read it."

"But what slogans have the others?" asked Mr. Miller.

"They can't sloganize so readily," said Watson. "They are suffering from what the alienists call 'complex inferiority,' if you know what that means. I don't myself. But what I mean is that Mr. Coolidge is in the better position. He's in. He wants to go ahead the way we are now headed, which is not a bad way, you all must admit. To keep going, when we're going right, that's common sense. That's the kind of common sense Lincoln talked when he advised us not to change horses in the middle of the stream. One might express it another way, don't scramble the eggs of prosperity now in the nest. In fact, there are many ways in which one might express this common sense."

"And what are the others saying?" asked Mr. Miller.

"I heard Mr. Davis's speech of acceptance," said Watson. "In half of it he scolded the republicans. Finding fault and scolding are easily done. It is harder to do something yourself. Mr. Coolidge has been doing things as president for a year. But Mr. Davis did not point to any thing wrong he had done."

"He couldn't," spoke up the chubby man, "for he's been doing what he believes is right."

"Then Mr. Davis suggested," Watson went on, "that we might still get into the league of nations. But that's old stuff now. We rejected it four years ago and in the meantime, in Europe, they have just signed up for the Dawes plan. We are helping Europe while keeping ourselves unentangled."

"And how is La Follette going to talk?" asked one man.

"He may not make a formal speech of acceptance," said Watson. "He has been nominated by so many kinds of blocs and parties, so called, that he does not know how to accept all in one speech. He has gathered around him all who think they have grievances against their government. He has so many kinds for him, including pink socialists and some red communists and I. W.

W.'s, that he himself seems lost in the hubbub. If that party could win in the election we would have the scenes around the Tower of Babel reenacted in Washington."

"But there are some good men in his following?"

"Plenty of them," said Watson. "Most Americans are good men and mean to do what's right, but some of them occasionally follow queer leaders. But many of the good men who have been lured away into this new movement may see their way out of it later. There will be a lot of thinking done before the voting is done. These men will see that this is essentially a socialistic-led movement, and men of sense in America do not want socialism."

"But what about La Follette himself?" asked Mr. Miller.

"He's making the best of what he realizes is his last political rally," said Watson. "He's an old man, almost three score and ten. He has come to that age soured. He thinks everything is wrong, because he hasn't been able to get what he wants, the presidency. He is not a well man. He was sick during most of the last session of congress. He was hardly ever in his seat in the senate. He will not make a speaking campaign. If he exerted himself he might not last until November. If the third ticket were elected, you might as well begin to think of Burton K. Wheeler as a very possible president, and he would be 'radical' enough to please the red communists as well as the pink socialists. Just think of Wheeler!"

"Me for Coolidge and common sense," said one man.

"You can't go wrong that way," said Watson.

## CHAPTER V

### PREPARING FOR MEETING IN GROVE

Clarence Watson had not been at Four Corners long when he received a telegram recalling him to his newspaper work. It brought sorrow to all for the visit was proceeding so happily.

But in the face of what had to be, the Millers invited their neighbors and friends to a picnic dinner in the grove, to give all an opportunity of meeting Mr. Watson and hearing him talk about affairs in Washington and the nation. Mr. Miller personally invited all the members of the "club" in the garage.

The Miller Grove at Four Corners was a famous meeting place and had been such for half a century. Burr oaks and white oaks grew there, and walnut trees and hickory trees added variety. The



grove had been there when the white settlers came. The fires that had probably denuded the prairies, could not reach it because of what had been a swamp and a deep ravine to protect it.

On the day of the picnic, Mr. Miller and his "loafers" from the garage "club" came early to help put the grove in order. Watson worked with them.

"When my father settled here," said Mr. Miller, during an interval of work, "there wasn't another settler between him and the lake."

"I have read," said Watson, "that the pioneers did not want close-up neighbors. They were individualists who moved on their own initiative."

"You mean they stood alone and did for themselves," said Mr. Miller, translating Watson's language into the vernacular for his "club" cronies. "That is correct. They were that way in those days."

"We have been losing some of that pioneer spirit in our American life," said Watson. "We are losing it much faster in the cities than in the country. In the cities we have today much mass-thinking and mass-action."

"Why not call it mob-thinking and mob-action?" asked the Lieutenant.

"Whatever you want to call it," said Watson. "But I hope American individualism and American initiative will not be submerged into any form of socialism here in the country. It is from the country that our cities draw the men who do the big things. Read over the lists of successful men in the cities and see where they come from. Seventy percent are rural bred."

"But while the country is supplying you with that kind of men, what are the cities returning to us?" asked the Lieutenant. "Today they are scattering among us their propagandas and some of them run pretty red."

"But are our city socialists making headway in the country?" asked Watson, with some concern.

"They did for a while," said the Lieutenant, "especially while our prices were running low. Whenever we are in hard luck, the preachers of discord come among us with their new fangled doctrines."

"And when a man is in hard luck," added Mr. Miller, "he has sensitive ears for all kinds of suggestions and remedies. He's like a sinking man reaching for straws."

"What helped their propaganda among us for a while," said the chubby member, "is the stuff that was sent out from Washington about corruption and all that. Many then began to believe that everything was going wrong."

"And you out here thought you might as well go wrong with it," suggested Watson, laughing. "As if two wrongs would make a right. But I am afraid you were wrong both in your conclusions and in the facts on which you based them."

"What were the facts?" asked the quizzical, thin man.

"The story is a long one," said Watson. "There were some facts, but nine-tenths of the fuss and muss was an attempt to make things appear as bad as possible and that for the sheer sake of politics. Some men proceeded on the Russian soviet maxim, 'hector and harass your government,' so as to disgust the people with it and have them turn it over to you."

"They surely did that," said Mr. Miller.

"But when Senator Walsh, a democratic investigator who wanted to make things appear as bad as possible for the republicans," said Watson, "made his final report, he was honest enough to admit that there was only one man in the oil transactions, for instance, connected with the government, whom he found guilty of 'reprehensible' conduct, which he termed 'essentially criminal' in character, and even against that man it had to be proved in the courts."

"But there were democrats in that too," said Mr. Miller.

"Yes, Mr. Doheny was a candidate for the democratic nomination for vice president in 1920," said Watson. "And Mr. McAdoo, his attorney, wanted to be president."

"That evens that up, politically," said the chubby man.

"No, it doesn't," said Watson quickly. "Wrong doing, whatever it is, can never be what you call evened up. It is no justification for wrong doing to say that others did it too. That was not the position that President Coolidge took in the matter. He took the position that all wrong doing must be ferreted out and punished, no matter whether it was done by republicans or democrats. He said he would shield no man because a republican, nor pursue another man because a democrat."

"And that's how Mr. Coolidge hit the bull's eye," said Mr. Miller. "When he spoke up that way we not only increased our confidence in him, but our confidence in our government came back."

"You should never have lost that confidence in your government as a whole," said Watson, "even if it is proved that one man

does wrong in it. A wrong man might get into even a church. But if you have men like Calvin Coolidge at the head, you need have no fear that any wrong doing will ever get far."

"We believe that of Coolidge," said the thin man.

"And he will justify your faith in him," Watson assured him.

## CHAPTER VI

### WHEN THE GUESTS BEGAN TO ASSEMBLE

The dinner in the grove was set for six o'clock, but long before that hour the guests began to assemble, for in the country they are seldom late.

"This doesn't look like hard times," suggested Watson, as he saw the heavy baskets and hampers lifted out of the automobiles and placed on the tables.

"Not starvation times, at least," remarked Jerry Jones.

"We've had no hard times out here as to food," said Mr. Miller, "but only as to money, what they call the cash."

"And now with prices going up we'd have more money if we had more to sell," said a ruddy-faced man. "I sold my corn and hogs too soon. But I have some wheat that looks like real money and I'll have some hogs later."

"But while you are counting yours in real money," suggested Watson, "please think of us in the cities and have some mercy on us. We have to do the paying this time. We have to buy our bread and bacon."

"Maybe you will be asking for laws to put prices down," said the thin, cynical man, "just as we've been asking for laws to put them up."

"I hope we won't have to go that far," said Watson, "although they are doing that very thing in Paris. I hope we shall be both willing and able to pay a little more for food, provided you get a little more for your products. We want you to prosper on your farms, for we have learned that unless you prosper here we can not prosper in the cities. None of us can prosper unless we all prosper. We must not think in blocs, but as a whole people."

"That's what I call common sense," said Mr. Miller.

"And that is part of what Mr. Coolidge calls common sense," added Watson. "The American people can not prosper in blocs. You want business to prosper in the cities so that the cities may absorb your products at remunerative prices for production. And



we want you to prosper on your farms so that you may buy what we manufacture in the cities."

"How to keep things balanced all the time, that's the problem," suggested Mr. Miller.

"Sometimes it can't be done," said Watson. "Something happens somewhere to upset the balance. The last time it was a World War, and it has taken a lot of patience and work and faith to get back to the balance."

"But the third party men now say the government could have done it, if they had been in," said one man.

"Oh, yes, the government," said Watson, laughing at the idea. "They would have the government buy everything at high prices and then sell it at low prices, thus pleasing both the producer and consumer. But the tax payers would have to foot the difference, and the tax payers are all the people, so what would that get us?"

"Let the government make money," said the cynic.

"And of course, that's easy," said Watson, "The government has printing presses. The government used the printing presses in Russia and Germany, and see where it landed them. After trying it, Germany is now going back on the old basis of common sense, and you will see Germany come out big and strong again."

"No, we can't go into any foolishness like that and expect to come out whole," said Mr. Miller. "We know that here as well as in Washington. The real farmers have never been in favor of the government buying their products. They know that spells disaster for all."

"It wouldn't be necessary if we could always have what they now call a shortage," said one farmer.

"But you cannot always have that," said Watson, "and no one should wish it. Some years we may be glad to eat what was left over from last year. A surplus is a good thing for the world as a whole, but it is a bad thing for you here on the farms if you all try to sell it at once."

"You'd have us store our surplus, when we have one?" asked the Lieutenant.

"At least I would not have you dump it on the markets," said Watson. "That is where you can work out your coöperative system, and I believe you will do it."

"Why not let the government do the the coöperating?" asked the cynical man.

"You don't mean that," said Watson. "The government may in many ways help you to help yourselves, and that is all that it

ought to be asked to do. The man who eats the bread has as much claim on the government as the man who grows the wheat. The government should facilitate fair trade between them, but not fix prices for either."

"Your're right about that," said Mr. Miller.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE "PEEPUL" OF THE POLITICIANS

"I thought you men came here to help us," said Mrs. Miller, pushing her way through those gathered about Watson. "But you seem to think of nothing except talking politics."

"But they will not forget to eat after we have done the work," said Dorothy, looking somewhat sternly at her talkative husband.

"While we're trying to save the country," replied Watson, "for goodness sake why can't you women do a little work and keep still about it?"

"That's the trouble with the country now," said Mrs. Miller. "There are too many men trying to save it by talking, instead of by working. President Coolidge is the one man who is talking the least and doing most."

"He's not exactly a yawper," said Jerry Jones.

"And that's what most of them are in politics," Mrs. Miller came back, "Yawpers, whatever that is. They yawp and yawp, and where does it get us?"

"It gets them into offices," suggested Jones.

"You are quite right, Mrs. Miller," said Watson. "There is too much talking. When the last congress was about to adjourn, Senator La Follette literally rushed from his hospital to Washington trying to hold it in session all summer."

"What for?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"Why to talk, of course," said Jerry Jones.

"No, to relieve the farmers, so he said," replied Watson. "After watching congress for six months and proposing nothing himself to relieve the farmers, he woke up."

"But as soon as they adjourned, relief began to come in rising prices," said the cynical man, grinning.

"Yes," said Watson, "and the rise in prices might have started earlier if they had adjourned earlier, for as long as congress continued to talk and to threaten, men hesitated to go ahead with

their business undertakings. Every one who had a project in mind waited to see what congress was going to do. Factories ran, slowed down, railroads waited to place orders for equipment and materials, and buyers stayed out of the markets until the men with wild speeches and hostile bills had adjourned."

"And if we should in November elect a congress composed of what you call wild men with hostile bills, what would happen?" asked Mr. Miller.

"My friend," said Watson, solemnly, "I would hesitate to predict what might happen. My own opinion is we would have the biggest slowing down of business we have ever had in this country. Put the wild men in power and wise men will withdraw to their cyclone caves to wait until the wind storm is over. Just think of it in personal terms, if you had money, would you invest it or hide it while a new and reckless crew was running the governmental train? Think that over, for it is something that you have to pass on when you vote in November. You will help decide whether this government shall go on as usual, or shall start on a socialistic route that may end in something like they have in Russia."

"That's bringing the issue home," admitted Mr. Miller.

"And that's the place to ponder these issues," said Watson. "In your homes. We must quit talking generalities. What will become of your homes, as well as your business, with socialism in the saddle politically?"

"Now you're talking straight," said Jerry Jones. "When I was a laboring man, I never saw the name of a political agitator or socialist signed to my pay checks. They are not the 'gents' who sign such checks—all they ever do is to nag and harass those who try to put the money in the banks to meet the weekly pay-rolls."

"And still we make popular heroes of those who play politics," said Watson, "and try to crucify those who struggle to keep things going so we can all make livings."

"And now La Follette is asking us to help him nationalize that kind of folly," spoke up the cynical man, "and make it our country's permanent policy."

"Exactly that," said Watson.

"We elected a bunch of them two years ago and what have they actually done for us so far?" asked Mr. Miller.

"They have talked and talked, scolded and scolded, and nagged



and nagged," said Watson, "but the Henrik Shipsteads and Magnus Johnsons, all together, did not bring forth one new or constructive idea."

"That's the way I sized them up as I tried to follow the *Congressional Record*," said Mr. Miller.

"All their relief measures were appropriation bills," said Watson. "But appropriation bills mean more tax bills and the people are paying about all the taxes they can stand."

"It's easy enough for politicians to appropriate moneys that others pay," said Mr. Miller.

"But didn't Magnus milk his own cow in Washington?" asked Jerry Jones.

"He milked one in a contest," said Watson, "and was defeated in that specialty of his statesmanship."

"But is it statesmanship?" asked the cynical man.

"No, it's just a political sideline," said Watson, smiling. "Politicians like to be picturesque for it is the spectacular that catches some people who vote."

"Then let them milk their cows and not the tax payers," insisted the cynic.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BUT WHAT OF "FARM RELIEF?"

"A while ago," said Jerry Jones, "you referred to the fact that all the Magnuses and the Ship — what is the rest of it? — and even La Follette himself had not made one practical proposition on farm relief, didn't you?"

"I did," said Watson.

"I agree with you that they have done nothing," Jerry Jones went on, "and I don't believe they ever will do anything more than talk, but just how much more are your leaders going to do for the farmers if we keep them in?"

"Yes," added the cynic, "just what is it?"

"The solution," replied Watson, "for what you call the farmer's problems will never be reached through partisan politics. The more you toss such problems about in politics the farther you will be from solving them. General Dawes told them that at Lincoln, Nebraska, the other day. He has the right idea."

"And just what is his idea?" asked Jerry Jones.

"He told them that so-called farm relief is a national question and one that should be settled in a national way. It is a non-

partisan question and it should not be dragged into partisan politics. The more politicians wrangle, the more confusion."

"Well, what would he do about it?" asked the cynic.

"He proposed to leave it to a national conference," replied Watson. "It ought to be a conference in keeping with the disarmament or the European reparations conference, for it is a big question. Mr. Dawes would summon to that conference the best minds on such subjects, not only the best agricultural minds but the best business minds, for the combined wisdom of the country is needed when you undertake such big problems."

"That's different from having a lot of talk-e-talk politicians wrangling over it," suggested Mr. Miller.

"Maybe Mr. Coolidge suggested that idea to Mr. Dawes, for Mr. Coolidge is some farmer and business man himself," suggested the chubby man.

"I do not know whose suggestion it is," said Watson, "and that doesn't matter, but it is certainly a leading in the right direction."

"It sounds as if it had both 'common sense' and 'brass-tacks' in it," said Mr. Miller, "and so Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Dawes may have gotten it up together."

"The objective point," said Watson, "Mr. Dawes told them in Lincoln, should be to find if an 'equality in earning capacity can be maintained between agriculture and industry.'"

"That's it," said Mr. Miller.

"Yes, that's it," repeated Watson. "The farmer's selling price and his buying price have been out of harmony. And while under the stimulus of higher prices the inequality is now disappearing, Mr. Dawes told them that this rise in prices had not solved the whole problem permanently. To find such permanent and basic solution would be the work of the proposed conference."

"And they promise to do that?" asked Mr. Miller.

"That is one of the things they will try to do," said Watson. "It is possible that some legislation may be applied. But it must not be of the hap-hazard political and partisan kind. It must be national in its scope and based on business and not politics."

"For one, I would like to see Mr. Dawes himself on such a commission," said the chubby man. "He helped to solve their European muddle. He seems to have a mind for solving problems. I have more faith in that sort of doing and get-there man than in all these professional politicians who yawp without knowing what they are yawping about."

"At least the time has come," said Watson, "when we must

approach such questions in a common sense way, instead of making them mere political vote-catching devices."

"I'm not a farmer," said Jerry Jones, "but I know enough to say that both farmers and laboring men — and I belong to labor, as I have told you — are too apt to follow the yawping politicians around Robin Hood's barn — and where has it ever got them anything, except more troubles."

"Yep," said the chubby man, "the time has come for 'common sense' applied to 'brass-tack' facts."

"The trouble in the last congress," said Watson, "was a multitude of vague ideas. No two men, even among farm leaders, were agreed on what should be done. The result was, nothing was done. Let's begin by finding something so sound that all can agree on it — and then do it."

"If that is the Coolidge and Dawes program, then I'm for them," said the cynic.

## CHAPTER IX

### CORN SUGAR AND OTHER THINGS

"I forgot to bring any sugar," said one of the women who were still busied about the tables.

"Never mind that," said Mary. "There is plenty of sugar here, and there's more in the house."

"Yes, we buy it by the sack," said the Lieutenant to the men with whom he was talking.

"And it probably comes from Cuba," said Watson, "when you might be getting it from Iowa."

"I've tried sugar beets," spoke up one of the farmers, "but it takes too much labor to grow them."

"But I meant sugar from corn, not beets," said Watson.

"We've been talking corn sugar here in Iowa," said Mr. Miller, "and we have hopes of it."

"There are more than hopes," Watson told him, "in this new industry. The manufacturers are now finding markets for half a million pounds output a day and the market for it can be expanded for it is an ideal sugar, even if it is not as sweet as cane or beet sugar. Sugar made from corn is dextrose, or what the doctors call blood sugar, while cane sugar is sucrose which the human stomach must convert into dextrose before it can be assimilated by the system."

"It's predigested sugar then?" said the cynic.



"It is ready for assimilation as soon as you eat it," said Watson. "It is so healthful and nutritious that doctors are now prescribing it in hospitals and for children. It is as harmless as bread."

"Do you think it will supplant other sugars?"

"It will never do that," said Watson. "Cane sugar will always have its uses, but if we substitute corn sugar for only a third or a fourth of present uses we would create a market for 100,000,000 bushels of corn."

"That would take care of the surplus corn in our biggest corn years," suggested the Lieutenant.

"And taking care of what you call your surplus corn in that way is better than trying to take care of it by law," suggested Watson. "That is the point I want to make out of this new sugar. It is better to create new industries and find new uses for your products than it is to pass more laws. The men who build such new factories and develop such new markets for your products are more useful to you and to the country than the men who talk political buncombe and manufacture nothing except political promises for campaign uses. Get right on that idea and you will find yourselves getting more right industrially and financially."

"How much sugar do we use?" asked Mr. Miller.

"The American consumption of sugar amounts now to  $5\frac{3}{4}$  million tons a year, or more than a hundred pounds for every man, woman, and child in the country. The Americans are the biggest sugar consumers in the world. And our consumption is still growing."

"Where does all this sugar come from?"

"The bulk of it from Cuba," said Watson, "although we are now producing almost a million tons at home from beets and cane in Louisiana, and we get more than another million tons from what we call our island possessions, meaning Porto Rico, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, and the Philippines. Our imports from Cuba for the year ending June 30 last were 3,929,000 tons. At 25 pounds of sugar from a bushel of corn it would take 314 million bushels of corn to displace Cuban cane. I repeat, there is no reason why we should not so substitute at least a third, or even more and that, as I have said, would dispose of 100 million bushels or more of our corn."

"That sounds like good business," said Jerry Jones. "But what about the tariff?"

"To maintain our beet sugar industry and to develop our corn

sugar industry," said Watson, "we need a tariff on sugar. A hundred pounds of extractable sugar can be produced in Cuba for around a dollar, while it costs around three dollars to produce the same amount of sugar from either beets or corn. The present tariff on Cuban sugar is \$1.76 a hundred pounds, and that just about makes up the difference in cost of production."

"But that's a tax on us consumers," said Jones.

"Yes and no," said Watson. "If you did not collect this so-called tax on sugar you would have to collect it in some other way. If the tariff is a tax it is one easily and cheaply collected at the custom houses, and every one pays his share for every one consumes sugar."

"But it increases the price of sugar," said Jones.

"Yes and no again," said Watson. "Remove this tariff and you would kill your beet sugar industry, and stop the development of corn sugar. That would give the foreign sugar producers control of the markets and they might easily work their prices up so that we would pay as much or even more than we are now paying for sugar."

"That's what would happen, sure enough," said Mr. Miller.

"But while our sugar probably costs no more," Watson went on, "with this tariff protection we can go on and develop our own sugar industry and use American grown corn instead of foreign grown cane, for at least a large part of our consumption."

"I'm for doing it," spoke up the chubby man.

"It's the American way," said Watson. "Under our American tariff system we have built up here the greatest industrial nation in the world — the nation of greatest producers and greatest consumers. I see no reason why we should abolish a system that has served us so well."

"And we won't abolish it," said Mr. Miller.

## CHAPTER X

### AROUND WELL-LADEN TABLES

The dinner was ready at last. Mary's announcement of the fact was greeted with cheers.

Every man found his own place, sitting with his own wife, and with their children around them.

The food was the best, and there was plenty of it, including big platters of cold fried chicken.

There were many good eaters at the tables, but Watson himself admitted he had never before eaten so much or so well. He insisted it was a feast, not a dinner.

When the eating was over, the dishes were hastily removed and put back into the baskets and hampers unwashed. When all this was done, Mr. Miller arose and rapped for order.

"I find myself in command," he said, "but by just what right I do not know."

"This is your grove, Dad," said the Lieutenant.

"And maybe, you're the oldest," said the thin man.

"Whatever the reason may be," Mr. Miller went on, "I'm in command, and I propose to be obeyed. Those on whom I call must speak, and those who are not called upon to speak must keep still. The boss of the gang does not handle pick or spade, and so I do not have to make a speech. But there are a few things I want to say on my own account.

"One of them is that I am glad we are all here. It is good to meet and to talk as friends and neighbors. I am also glad that we have with us again our young friend from Washington, his wife, our Dorothy, and their children.

"I have been thinking that this is another momentous year in American politics. Every presidential election is a momentous event. Our country, like our souls, must be saved periodically. This year it must be saved not from enemies without, but from enemies from within."

"You mean borers from within," suggested Watson.

"Yes, that describes them," Mr. Miller went on, "but many of them, or most of them, are not enemies of our country and their country. They are mostly merely misled men.

"I have heard it said that we are all stockholders in a pretty big and going concern, called the U. S. A. As such stockholders we must pay a little attention to the business of this concern. In the November elections we will elect new directors and managers for it and every man and woman ought to take an intelligent interest in that proceeding. Every one ought to vote, at least.

"To do this we have plenty of patriotism left. Down deep in our hearts we are all still patriotic. But we are in danger of indifference. Don't be indifferent this year, for there is too much at stake.

"In recent times the mind of America has been somewhat confused. But the heart of it is still right. We have been under some stress and strain. Out here we are apt to think the stress



and strain have been the greatest. But maybe not. Others have had their problems to solve as well as we have had ours.

"While we were under this stress and strain, the propagandists and the 'borers from within,' and also from without, came among us. By appealing to prejudices they have sought to array man against man and class against class. They have tried to turn the hearts of the people even against their own government.

"Our American pioneers had a good saying. It was, go right straight ahead and right straight through. That saying is still good. Let us not leave the main roads to follow angling roads that may end in a morass.

"When Job was afflicted many came to give him advice. Some of his counsellors were wise and some were otherwise. Job won the victory by keeping the faith and he had patience.

"Like Job, we have been somewhat afflicted, and like Job, we've had many counsellors, some wise and some otherwise. Some counsellors have come to us even from Russia. But if we are wise we shall not follow them.

"They have told us that our government has been to blame for our afflictions. I do not believe it. Our afflictions began when the nations abandoned themselves to the follies of a World War. Through it all, our government has maintained its credit and its honor. We still have the best government left on earth. Let's keep it so.

"But I have said enough. I will now call on the first speaker, Hezekiah Smith, an old-time friend of mine who dropped into Storm Lake this morning and whom I persuaded to remain long enough to tell you some of the things he has been telling me. He can talk about anything he wants to, even the tariff, but he must be brief, for long speeches will not be tolerated tonight."

## CHAPTER XI

### THE TARIFF IS INJECTED

Mr. Miller's reference to the tariff, in introducing Hezekiah Smith, started a conversational discussion of this issue that forced Mr. Smith to wait his speech.

"Let them have it out," said Mr. Miller.

"I want to ask Mr. Watson a few questions about the tariff," said a serious faced man, arising.

"All right, fire away, Gridley," said Watson.

"It happens my name is not Gridley," said the man still more seriously. "My question is this," he added, "Is it not true that but for the tariff we could buy our commodities cheaper?"

"Undoubtedly," replied Watson, "they can make some things cheaper in Europe than we can make them here, and if we let them in free they could be sold here for less."

"Then why not let them in?" asked the man.

"And what would you do with the Americans who are now making those things?"

"Let them do something else."

"What, for instance?" asked Watson. "Recently there was brought to New York from Czechoslovakia a shipment of women's garments. These garments could be sold in New York for \$30 a dozen. But the cost of making them in America was \$60 a dozen."

"Then American wages are too high," said the man.

"You might not think so, my friend," said Watson, "if you had to support your family in New York on those wages. But if we would let those foreign garments in free, the American workers would have to work for foreign wages, which are probably \$1 a day, or else quit work. There are probably a million garment workers in New York and its manufacturing area. Suppose they had to work for \$1 a day, or become idle, then who would buy your farm products at high prices?"

"They would still have to eat," insisted the man.

"But they might have to eat soup in the streets," said Watson, "instead of pork cut from \$10 hogs. Then what would become of your hog markets and prices?"

"We could sell our products to Czechoslovakia, or wherever they made those garments," said the man.

"But how much pork cut from \$10 hogs could those workers receiving a dollar a day buy?" asked Watson. "No, from 85 to 95 per cent of what you produce on your farms has to be consumed in America and unless Americans have work and good wages they can not buy them at prices that are fair to you who produce them."

"I guess," said Mr. Miller, "we would better keep our Americans working, even if our women have to pay a little more for their garments — we sell more hogs than we buy garments, anyway."

"That's the philosophy of the tariff," said Watson.

"I want to ask a question," said another man, when the first questioner subsided. "Is it not true that we farmers buy our

goods in protected markets, but that we sell our products in free trade markets?"

"That is what you have been told recently," said Watson, "and there is just about enough plausibility in such statements to give them credence. No, it is not true that you sell in a free trade market and buy in a protected one—that is, it is not true as a whole, although it is true of some things. Your butter, your eggs, your corn and even wheat are protected and so are your meats. Those who produce these things not only believe in protection, but they are asking for more protection. The Iowa Corn Growers Association is asking the president to increase the tariff on corn from 15 to 22½ cents to keep out the Argentine corn which is just now coming in by millions of bushels. The dairy-men of the country have made a protest against importing butter and they want the tariff increased from 8 to 12 cents."

"Are we importing butter?" asked the man.

"Last year Denmark shipped into America nine million pounds, and four millions came in from New Zealand on the other side of the globe," said Watson. "So much came in that we now have a surplus of our own butter in cold storage. Take off the present eight cents a pound tariff and we would be flooded with foreign butters and, presumably, it would go down at least that eight cents a pound."

"I wouldn't take it off," suggested Mr. Miller.

"I think I would increase it to 12 cents," added Watson, "although as a city man I would have to pay a little more for butter, but I would rather pay that little more than have American farmers get less for their product than the cost of making it. The same is true of eggs of which we imported last year millions of pounds, dried and pickled, from China and other countries. And as for corn, it is found they can undersell your prices at seaboard by bringing corn as ballast in vessels from the Argentine. So you see," added Watson, "you do not sell all your products in so-called free trade markets."

"But what we buy, what about that?" asked one man.

"Not all that you buy is protected," said Watson. "There is no tariff on shoes, nor on leather from which they are made. Shoes are on the free list."

"Then why are they so high?" asked the questioner.

"Many things enter into that," said Watson, "chief of which are wages, but the tariff is not one of the items in the cost of shoes. Your binder twine is another thing that is on the free list.



There is no tariff on barbed wire, nor is there on farm machinery. In fact, the farmer has a formidable list of things that he buys in free trade markets."

"Then why have they been telling us that what we buy is protected and that we pay protective prices for it, while what we sell is not protected and we get free trade world prices for it?" asked the man.

"Those who have been telling you that do not know," said Watson, "and some of them do not want to know. They are politicians who deal in half truths. Half truths, cleverly told," added Watson, "often serve the purposes of the politicians who want to get your votes."

"And you think we farmers have a stake in the tariff?" asked Mr. Miller to clinch that truth.

"I should say a very vital stake," replied Watson. "First, you are interested in a good American standard of wages, for unless the men who work in the cities have work and get good wages, they can not pay you high prices for what you produce and they eat. A man who gets only a dollar a day, which is a high foreign wage scale, can not buy much 30 or 40 cent meat cut from \$10 hogs. That may be called your indirect interest in the tariff. The direct interest I have already cited in the tariff on your own products, such as butter, eggs, corn, and even wheat."

## CHAPTER XII

### HEZEKIAH SMITH MAKES HIS SPEECH

"You are all mistaken," Hezekiah Smith told them when he finally got attention for his speech. "I had no intention of even alluding to the tariff. I do not know enough about the tariff to discuss it intelligently, and I do not want to follow the prevailing habit in American politics of talking about things that the talkers do not know anything about. I am going to talk to you of something that I do know about."

"Go to it, Hezekiah," shouted a man far back.

"I am what they call a 'dirt farmer,' " he went on. "That is, I live on my own land and I work it with my own hands. But I use my head, too. Now-a-days you need a head in farming as well as in business. Some farm with only their hands and feet. That is, they hold the plow and follow it. But those who use their heads, who think and plan and study, get along better."

"When I was much younger than I am now I was somewhat full of notions. For a while I believed that we could set this old world right by making a few more laws. My neighbors believed in me and in my notions, and sent me to Des Moines where I helped to make some laws of the kind they are still talking about, for the politicians never seem to become wiser.

"But I thank God that I soon became wise enough to know we can not make the world over with a few laws. I returned from Des Moines believing that I could do more for myself than they could do for me either in any state legislature or in the congress in Washington. Now when one of these ever-promising and all-promising politicians tries to stop me to tell me how he can remake the world so that we can all live in it without working, I tell him frankly that in my opinion he is simply a man who is himself too lazy to work."

"That's hitting 'em right, Hezekiah," they shouted.

"Just now some of these lazy and mentally lousy fellows are telling us that some one, or may be it's the government, is oppressing and robbing us, and if we will kindly turn the government over to them they will get rid of the oppressors and the robbers and then we can all have or take what we want. I wonder how much they are thinking of us, and how much of themselves?

"I know as well as they do that something has been the matter with us. We have had to pay for the biggest folly of history, the World War. You can't kill millions of men and destroy billions of property without paying for it and suffering over it afterwards.

"But instead of using common sense to reconstruct and revivify things, these politicians are resorting to the cheap political tactics of trying to array one class against another as if we could overcome the evils of the World War by getting into internal strife, by arraying class against class and section against section, and bloc against bloc. Might not such dissensions among ourselves leave us worse off than we were?

"I hail from Garnavillo, which your presiding officer forgot to tell you. I do not blame him for it, for Garnavillo is a very small place. You will not find it even on the maps of the railroads, for no railroad comes nearer than six miles to it. But in that village we had on deposit the other day \$2,000,000, and not a dollar of it was borrowed money. It was the money which we had digged out of the soil of Clayton county, Iowa, and much of it came out of milking cows.

"I have just been in Wisconsin, where, I believe, is the seat of our political discontent. I went there to look up some new cows. They have good cows up there. I saw no evidence of the cruel injustice that the political agitators are preaching to the country. The people seemed prosperous, on the farms as well as in the cities, although some complain that taxes were too high. Senator La Follette may fool them again, politically, but some of the men I talked with left me in doubt on that.

"I have also been traveling in the Dakotas, across those fine stretches of land that are destined for something more and better than political discontent. I own land up there. As a land owner I know all that they have passed through. It has not been easy. Sometimes the crops have been small and most of the time prices have been too low. But to me that was not due to politics and they are not things that can be made better by politics.

"But they are better already and that without politics. The new world-demands for products have done more for my land up there than all the wild proposals of the politicians. A man who wanted to buy a piece of land followed me to the train. He offered me a fair price too. But I see a fairer price ahead. After the backsets and misfortunes and the calamity talk it is wonderful how land has held up. There have been enough lies told about our farms everywhere to bankrupt Paradise itself. Nothing but land could withstand such calamity talk. Under such attacks any other form of property would go down to the demnition bow-wows.

"Farming up there as well as here is coming back into its own, and that, I repeat, without the aid of the politicians, but in spite of them, and with them, in fact, hanging about our necks like so many millstones. Wise men looking to the future are investing in corn and wheat lands. I read of one firm that is so investing a million dollars. I read in the Miller, Hand county, South Dakota, *Gazette* that the movement back to the corn and alfalfa lands of that state has already started, and the paper predicts that in the near future such lands will be selling for much higher prices. I can not doubt it, after seeing it.

"In Miller, I met a realtor who told me that a heavy movement of settlers into South Dakota has commenced. He said the railroad reports showed that five hundred cars of immigrants and their goods had entered the state up to the first week of June last. He is saying that the time to buy lands is now. I heard much more



about land and corn and alfalfa than I did of politics. The people are tired of politics and they want to go back to business and to what Mr. Coolidge has called common sense.

"I have a son in Kansas and a daughter in Nebraska. They have both written me letters full of the expressions of new hope and confidence. In fact, my son in Kansas boasts that they are politically as sane in that state as in the president's Vermont. Kansas has been standing up, you know. Nebraska, my daughter thinks, is better represented by Charley Dawes than by Charley Bryan — she says it's calmness against calamity. I guess she got the idea of calmness from Coolidge.

"So everywhere men and women seem to be working out their own salvation. The chains of slavery that the political orators rave about I guess are the chains on the hind wheels of the automobiles that I found as thick in the Dakotas as in Iowa.

"And if there is any salvation to be worked out in Washington — and some, I think, can be worked out there — it can be done by Coolidge and Dawes better than by any of the loud mouthed reformers with their patented political nostrums. Mr. Coolidge without a vice president to help him, and with a congress that has had a hostile balance of power against him, has been doing pretty well.

"When I have a hired man on my farm who attends to business and gets results, I don't get rid of him. I keep him on the job. I encourage him and sometimes I even pay him more money. I think Calvin Coolidge is a pretty good hired man to keep in Washington. And I think Charles Dawes will be willing to work his head off for results. He's that kind of a man. They are going to make a good team, as we say on our farms. For one thing, they will pull together, which John Davis and Charles Bryan can hardly be expected to do, for one may want to go up Wall street and the other up Main street.

"I guess that's all I have to say. I thank your chairman for not calling me down, for I may have spoken too long. But I may never be here again. Keep Coolidge in Washington and add Dawes to him and we'll come out with more money in the banks and more happiness in our hearts than we have ever had.

"We are told that God is not mocked, and let us not be deceived in this election."

## CHAPTER XIII

## DOROTHY MAKES A SPEECH

"I see that you all agree with me that Hezekiah Smith has made a good speech," said Mr. Miller, while the applause still lingered. "I am now going to ask Mrs. Dorothy Watson to tell you something about the Washington end of this political year."

When Dorothy arose her face was like her hair, in some confusion. But face and hair were both very becoming for they were finely feminine.

"I was told that I would be called upon," she said, smiling, "and so I committed a few of my thoughts to paper. In preparing these notes, let me explain, I may have made the mistake of assuming that you would all be republicans, and if there are any here who are not such, I hope I shall not offend them, or hurt their feelings."

"I guess I'm the only democrat here," spoke up Jerry Jones, "and you needn't mind me, for after they tied a populist tail to a plutocratic kite in New York I don't care much whether she flies or not."

"Thank you," said Dorothy, smiling again. "I'm not going to say anything about your kite or its tail. I'm just going to tell you something about our own candidates. I have lived two years in Washington, but I still feel more at home here in the middle west, for I was born here. In Washington, I occasionally meet prominent men, by reason of my husband's position . . ."

"And his nerve," suggested Watson.

"By reason of his position," Dorothy repeated, "I meet many prominent men. I have met Mr. Coolidge and I know Mrs. Coolidge better. When you meet Mr. Coolidge you know you are in the presence of a sincere and earnest man. The feeling comes to you that in the care of such a man your country is in safe hands. He is a man of few words. But he is not silent. He does not make many promises. But he is rich in performances. He is a good politician for the very reason that he refuses to think merely politically."

"No man as president has been more courageous, or daring. He has the courage of his convictions and he always dares to do what he believes to be right. I think that is why we women like him. We like a man we can respect; one we can look up to; a man who dares to be right."

"I think the women of America have found in Mr. Coolidge that something which I may call the soul of America. It is not exactly an idealism, although it is that too. But it is also something more practical. It embraces a sense of moral duty. His leadership is essentially more moral than political. It is deep rooted in the great traditions of American history, and that is what we most need now.

"Of Mrs. Coolidge I feel like saying that of all the women I have met in public life I would choose her for the wife of a president. To me she is an ideal American woman, a wife and mother. Like her husband, she came up from what I may call the ranks. As a teacher she was a self-supporting woman. Her present exalted position has in no manner changed her relations to her fellow beings. There is no pride of place in her, except the pride of well seeming and well doing. The Coolidges live in the White House even as you and I live in our humbler homes. They are just 'folks' and always American.

"I have met Mr. Dawes, but I do not know him so well. He has always seemed such a busy man. He has had to be a busy man for he has done three of the biggest things that have been done in the world recently.

"When the American army was somewhat marooned and almost mired in France, General Pershing asked that Charles G. Dawes, whom he had known in Lincoln, Nebraska, be sent to help him. As purchasing agent and director of supplies, Mr. Dawes did wonders there. He did things and he got things done. He went after results and got them.

"In 1921, to reduce the wastes and extravagances of the government, congress passed the budget law. President Harding sought a man big enough to administer it. He remembered Dawes in France and made him the director of the budget. Mr. Dawes literally made the office and made it effective. He made a straight and honest path through a jungle of governmental waste and extravagance. He cleared the way for debt reductions and tax reductions. He did a big thing in a big way.

"The third big thing he did, and it is quite the biggest, for it is of world significance, has just been completed. Five years after the war, Europe was still in a morass, with France in the Ruhr, Germany in distress, and the rest in doubt. Finally, a commission was created to try to solve this riddle of the world. Charles G. Dawes was made a member of that commission. He was so potent



on it that it became known as the Dawes commission, and the proposed settlement as the Dawes plan.

"What ambassadorial councils and leagues of nations could not solve was solved by this commission. Both France and Germany have just signed the pact. To the world it means peace in what has been a distracted Europe, and for America it means a new place in world affairs as well as reöpening markets.

"Do you not want that kind of a doing-man to be the aid of President Coolidge in Washington, and to help give direction and purpose to American affairs?

"With such a captain and such a mate in Washington, who shall say it will not be well with our country?

"And now, I have said enough. I am going to thank you for listening to me, and sit down."

## CHAPTER XIV

### JERRY JONES SPEAKS OUT OF ORDER

"Hold on there!" shouted Jerry Jones, getting on his feet, when Mr. Miller was about to introduce the next speaker.

The applause was renewed and redoubled as a greeting to a man who looked so dreadfully in earnest.

"You may think you're running this show," he said, almost shaking his fist at Mr. Miller, "but I'm going to show you I can put something in it that is not on your card."

"Go on and do it," said Mr. Miller. "If I had known that you wanted to speak I would have called on you."

"I didn't want to speak," said Jerry Jones, "until the lady that's just spoken said she was afraid of hurting my feelings, being what looks like the only democrat here. I want to tell her she hasn't hurt my feelings, nary a bit. I know a lady when I hear her speak, and she who has just spoken is a lady all right enough. I have heard her husband too, but I want to tell him that to her he isn't one, two, three."

"What's the use of telling me what I already know?" spoke up Watson, in a sort of self-defense.

"Well, I'm telling you, even if you think you know it already," said Jerry Jones. "Some of you smart fellows need to have the truth rubbed into you.

"You all know me. I'm the man who runs the garage at the

Lake, where a gang of tired loafers come to talk politics and weather and crops and prices while I work. They call my garage their club. But I pay the rent. There's lots of these talking fellers for whom some one else pays the rent. I see all these club loafers are here tonight. I watched them while the eating was under way. I didn't notice they were a bit tired then. They never are tired with their mouths, whether it's eating or talking."

"Hit 'em again," shouted Watson this time.

"I told you a while ago that I'm a democrat. Well, I'm that still, I'm telling you. I was born that way, and when I'm dead you can put a board at my head, or at my feet, for all I care, and paint on it, 'here lies a democrat.'

"With me politics is not a disease that you catch like the measles or smallpox. Some men nowadays get their politics like they used to get their religion, at some revival meeting. They are excited for a while, and then they aint. They're the fellows who follow every Will-o'-the-wisp. But those Willies, I'm telling you, never get you anything or get you anywhere.

"I like a man who's something in politics, either one thing or another, and not just nothing. I mean a democrat or republican, and I put democrat first because that's the best thing to be, in my opinion, and without offense to the lady that's just spoken so finely. A democrat or republican stands for something. He's got something both behind him and before him. He's not just a straw showing which way the wind is blowing. He's like a man who puts up the collateral in the bank where he borrows the money. It's not just a promissory note he puts up, with the promiser, may be, going away over night. That's what men without a party are like. They're just trying to get theirs without putting anything up. But where do you who follow them get yours? It's yours you want, not their's.

"Just now there are a lot of these fellows running around without a party, and they've started one of them, Senator La Follette, running for president, without no party, and without no name for it anyway. They're going to name it after they get through with it. I guess they can't find a real name for their party because they don't know who's the real father of it. I guess also that if they'd hunt far enough they'd find the real father is a socialist or an I. W. W., what we call the 'wobblies.' I notice Mr. La Follette has been trying to shoo away the redder communists, but some of them have a part in it all right enough, as you'll find out.

"The lady that's just spoke said something about right. It's all

right to be right, as she says Mr. Coolidge is. But if I couldn't be right, I'd still be something and not just simply nothing, as I have said.

"I was a soldier once, that I was. And this country looked mighty good to me, coming back from Cuba. If some of those fellows that are always kicking about their own country, would get out of it for a while they'd be mighty glad to get back in again and they might quit kicking, but maybe not, for they are always that way.

"Well, what I was going to say was that when I was soldiering I liked the men who fought on one side or the other, and I hated those who foraged between the lines. Foraging between the lines, that isn't soldiering, and it isn't politics, at least not that's decent. That kind of soldiers and politicians try to play both ends while staying safe in the middle, where the loot may be.

"That isn't playing the game fair and I'm not for anything that isn't fair. Some of these fellows that's now going to save the country, to hear them tell it, didn't do much of the saving when there was a war on. Some of them were mixed up with the wobblies out west, and some of us didn't think much of La Follette at that time. I didn't like what they did at that time for I had a son in the war, and so did some of you, and no Teddy came along to take all the hills in France as the old Teddy did in Cuba.

"Of course, Charley Dawes may have pulled the army out of the mire in France, as the lady has told us about. I guess he did something over there, and I'm not for taking away any credit from any man for doing anything even if he is now a republican candidate for vice president, what another Charley is for us democrats.

"But, maybe I'm getting nowhere with this talk. Well, I didn't want to say anything anyhow except that I liked the lady's speech and that she didn't hurt my feelings, not a nary bit.

"But now that I'm up I want to say also that I want this country to go either democrat or republican, and I still put democrat first, you see. If you're going to elect Coolidge and Dawes, as you seem to think you are, I want you to give them a republican congress back of them, real republicans and not the kind that are like silk purses made of sows' ears. You've got to back a man up. In Washington you can't just go rambling around as I have heard them do in jazz. To back a man up right, that's just horse sense. And if there were any horses left they'd laugh at those fellows that go jazzing around in politics. But horses is going out and so is horse sense, at least in politics, so it seems.



“And one thing more I want to tell you. I’m no farmer, dirt nor nothing. I came from labor and I still hold a union card and am proud of it. I was juggled out when there was four million idle, and then I bought my garage, where I repair cars and do it right and at right prices. If you don’t believe it, try me.

“But I don’t want no labor party and I don’t want no farm party. Give me a U. S. A. party, like the democrats and republicans. I’m for the whole country. If I couldn’t be a democrat, I’d be a republican, and not just a little red herring of some kind. And these political herrings are reddish, all right, even if they think they are only pinkish. Or if they’re not red yet, they will be when they’re in.

“No, ladies and gentlemen, I’m strong for the U. S. A. stuff. That’s what counts with me.

“And now I’m thinking of something else. Some of the Willies and the Wobblies talk about big business as if they’s afraid of it. They’re going to relieve you of it. But not with my vote. For one, I like to see business run big, the bigger the better. When it runs that way we all get something, and when it don’t we all get nothing, except soup in the streets, and I’ve eaten of that too. When business runs big I get plenty to do and get paid for it. And you get something bigger for everything you raise on your farms. Instead of murdering big business, I’m for doctoring it up to make it stronger that way. Those naggers of big business, keep away from them. If you were a waiter they’re the kind of fellows that wouldn’t give you even a tip. They don’t sign no pay checks that I have ever seen. They just worry those who do sign that kind of checks.

“And some of those that never did nothing for themselves want the government to do everything for them. I want to say something about them too. They want the government to take the railroads over and operate them again. After while they may want the government to take over your farms, for I have read that agriculture is a basic industry and it’s the basic industries they want the government to run.

“Well, the government tried to run the railroads once. The tax payers aint through paying for it yet and no one has heard about the freight rates they put up being down yet. But the politicians, what do they care, they don’t pay any taxes and they let Jones pay the freight — and I’m one of the Joneses.

“Charley Bryan’s for some of that stuff too, and that’s what I don’t like about him. Our Charley has a lot of notions that don’t

just suit me. He goes a sort of rambling around like they do in that jazz.

"No, fellows, and ladies too, before you vote to turn the railroads over to the politicians again, I'm thinking it would be better to buy up all the peanut stands and let the politicians run them to show us what they can do with them. But maybe it's asking too much to let peanut politicians do even that much — but we could find that out, and it's better that way than trying it on the railroads again.

"Now I'm about ready to quit. But one thing more and that is, that we don't want to throw any more monkey wrenches into either big business or little business, and least of all in the government's business. Let's quit fooling and quit rambling around. Let's go right straight ahead and right straight through, as Hezekiah has told us about, or was it Mr. Miller?

"Let's quit looking for the millennium, whatever that is, and let's be sure we get something to eat and get it all the time, even if it can't be as good as what we've had here tonight, thanks to the ladies.

"Keep on the main road, but if by mistake you should follow some rambling Wobbly off on a side road and get into the mire, send for Jerry Jones, the garage man, and he'll pull you out, even if you have been damn fools for getting in, and even if Jerry can't do it as Charley Dawes pulled Pershing out of the mire in France, as the lady has told us about.

"I noticed that the lady said thank you for listening to her. I guess that must be good manners, for she has the good manners all right, and so I'm going to say thank you too and quit and sit down."

## CHAPTER XV

### THE TALE OF CONSPIRACY

"Jerry, that is the first and best speech I ever heard you make," said Mr. Miller, while the applause that had followed it was dying down.

But it was in vain that Mr. Miller tried to introduce the next speaker. They were all talking and laughing over what Jerry Jones had told them in his picturesque and brusque way. Every one knew it was the truth.

"Who is the real father of this party without a name, anyway?" asked the chubby man.

"It has a whole bloc of fathers," suggested Watson, "and every little bloc has a movement as well as meaning of its own, and has some grievance or wants something."

"Then it must be a little blockhead," said one man.

"On the contrary," said Watson, "it is full of cunning and it's the cunning of it that makes it dangerous."

"But they can not make it win?" said the cynic.

"They don't expect to win," said Watson. "They are not that foolish. All that they are hoping for is to keep the others from winning. What they are working for is a minority that can hold the balance of power between the two big parties and then dictate or destroy."

"How can they do that?" asked Mr. Miller.

"It looks easy — to them," said Watson. "Presidents and vice presidents are elected in the electoral college. In this college each state has as many votes as it has senators and representatives in congress, making 531 in all. Election is by a majority. A majority is 266. Suppose now they carried only Wisconsin, with its 13 votes in the electoral college, and of the other 518 votes in the college, the republicans had 259 and the democrats 259. Then neither the republicans nor democrats could elect a president and vice president and the election would be thrown into the congress."

"But if they carried more than Wisconsin?"

"Then they would be all the more sure of throwing the election into the congress," said Watson.

"You mean a handful of politicians could dictate to the whole country," said the cynic.

"That's what they are aiming to do," Watson told him. "That's what a minority did in Russia, and the Russian soviet is in many ways their model."

"And what would happen in the house?"

"The house of representatives as now made up could not elect a president," said Watson. "When the house votes on president, each state has one vote and that vote is determined by the members of congress from the state. There are 48 states and it would take 25 such votes to elect. Twenty-three states now have republican majorities in the house and that includes Wisconsin; 20 are democratic and five are tied between the two parties and could not agree upon casting a vote. That means the house could not elect a president."

"Then what?" sighed Mr. Miller.



"In the meantime," said Watson, "the senate would be balloting for a vice president, which must be one of the two receiving the highest number of votes in the electoral college for that office. That, of course, would be either Mr. Dawes or Mr. Bryan. The senate as now made up has 51 nominally republicans, 43 democrats, and two farm-laborites, Johnson and Shipstead of Minnesota. But the 51 nominally republicans include Mr. La Follette, himself, who, of course is not a republican and would not vote with them. It is to be feared there would be at least two or more others nominally republicans who would not vote, or might not vote with their party. That would mean that the republicans would not have the necessary 49 votes to elect Mr. Dawes vice president."

"Then they would have to elect Mr. Bryan?"

"If it wasn't Mr. Dawes," said Watson, "it would have to be Mr. Bryan, if there is an election at all. And I believe the La Follette men would make Mr. Bryan president, for they could get more from him than from Mr. Dawes. That is, they could control Mr. Bryan more than Mr. Dawes and it is minority control and dictation they are aiming at."

"And if they would vote for neither Mr. Dawes nor Mr. Bryan, then we would be without a president?" asked Mr. Miller.

"That's exactly it," said Watson.

"It's a terrible predicament," said the chubby man.

"But the predicament need not arise," Watson told him. "The conspiracy of the minority can easily be frustrated. All that is necessary is for the people at the polls in the coming election to express themselves vigorously with their ballots. The best and surest way to make that expression is to vote for Coolidge and Dawes, who are in the best position to win the victory."

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE RED FRINGE OF RUSSIA

Mr. Miller himself had no thought of going on with the speeches. The auditors had, many of them, left their seats and stood crowded around Mr. Watson, as if eager to hear more of what he had called the conspiracy of a minority and their designs on the control of the government.

"You have referred repeatedly to Russia," said Mr. Miller, "just why do you do that?"

"I have done it advisedly," answered Watson. "To me it is something real and impending. Russia and its red soviet confronts the whole world."

"And what do you mean by that?"

"I mean," said Watson, "that just now there are only two working models of government left in the world. One of them is the soviet of Russia, and the other is the republic of America. Both are taken to be governments of the people. In Russia we see an incoherent mass living under the dictations and in the dread of life and property of a minority that is cunning and resourceful in the expedients of terror. There they have no elections and no free press. The men in control seized the government and they have never made an appeal for authority to the people. They have thrown out God and they have deified Lenin, whose embalmed body imbedded in red plush is now publicly exhibited."

"That's a true Russian picture," said Mr. Miller.

"In the United States of America we still have a true representative government," Watson went on. "A government in which a majority will register their will in the coming elections and where a responsible government will be carried on at the will of that majority. We are a free people with a free press. We have a congress elected by the people to make laws, a supreme court to interpret the laws, and a president to enforce them, each with checks upon the other, to safeguard the rights of the people and to maintain the integrity of the government; three coördinate branches of the government, each supreme in its own functions, but none supreme, that is, absolute over the whole people."

"And that's a true American picture," said Mr. Miller.

"At the present time all the governments are in a state of flux," said Watson. "They will be re-shaped on either the Russian or the American model. Mussolini temporarily saved Italy from sovietism by establishing a sort of beneficent dictatorship. Germany has been on the brink, and England, the old oak-ribbed England, has been hovering betwixt and between."

"And which way is the trend now?" asked one eager man.

"The trend is Americaward," said Watson. "The settlement just effected in Europe is the greatest step in the right direction that has been registered since the World War. An American outlined that plan and gave it potency. That American is Charles G. Dawes. By a happy circumstance of politics he is now one of our candidates in the pending election. I believe that the plan which

is called the Dawes plan has saved Europe from the Russian debacle."

"Then Russia is out of it, you think?" asked Mr. Miller.

"No, not out of it yet," said Watson. "The Soviets will not give up without a further struggle. They are sending out more emissaries to stir up strife and to plot revolutions. They are especially bitter against America, for America has stood in their way."

"But they are not trying to influence our elections, are they?" asked the cynic.

"Not directly," said Watson. "But if they could still pray over there they would not be praying for Coolidge and Dawes, or Davis and Bryan, but for La Follette and Wheeler. They know their sympathizers are all back of the third party movement. They know Debs over there and Debs is backing the La Follette-Wheeler ticket, and so are Berger and Hilquitt."

"And Burton K. Wheeler?" asked Mr. Miller.

"Yes, they know him too," said Watson. "A year ago Mr. Wheeler, now candidate for vice president, traveled in Russia as a sort of official guest of the soviet. He came back praising their government, almost above that of his own country. He has all the radicals, the I. W. W., the pink socialists, and the red communists trailing after him. They know him and he knows them."

"And La Follette, he's socialistic, isn't he?" asked Mr. Miller.

"That he is a socialist outright is the testimony of Victor Berger, who knows him in his own Wisconsin. Let me quote what Berger said of him, recently, when the socialistic party endorsed his candidacy. 'La Follette,' said Berger, 'is a socialist in everything except name. He has been so for twenty years. He hasn't voted the republican ticket since 1904. There's no reason why he can't be our candidate.' That is what Victor Berger told his fellow socialists about La Follette, and upon that assurance they made him their candidate."

"All this is new revelation to me," confessed Mr. Miller, "and also a new call to duty in this campaign."

"If it is not the red fringe of Russia in America, what is it?" asked Watson.

"Well, let's do our American duty," said Jerry Jones. "We like what red there is in the American flag, but we do not want to make it all red."

"Under which flag?" said Watson, "that's the question for every voter to answer in November."



## CHAPTER XVII

## REWRITING THE CONSTITUTION

"If you are all through asking questions," suggested Mr. Miller, "we will proceed with the speeches."

"Before you do that," said one man, "I would like to ask Mr. Watson how they would proceed, if they, the La Follette party, won."

"So soon as they could," replied Watson, "they would probably undertake to rewrite the constitution of the United States. That's basic for them. They want to get rid of the limitations that the constitution places on them. They want to run things without court interferences."

"Have they said they would do so?" asked Mr. Miller.

"They promise it in their platform," replied Watson. "To them the constitution is an ancient and outworn document."

"And what would they change about it?"

"What might they leave unchanged about it?" asked Watson in reply. "They will begin, no doubt, on the sections creating and defining the supreme court. That court stands in the way of these socialistic reformers. It is a check and they do not want checks. They want no one to review their work."

"What they complain of," said Mr. Miller, "as I understand it, is the action of the court setting aside acts of congress."

"Exactly," said Watson. "Congress now makes laws. Or rather, it passes bills. They become laws when the president has signed them, and after that the supreme court can set them aside if it finds that they violate the provisions of the constitution. The constitution, you know, limits the powers of congress, as it limits those of the president. There are certain rights and liberties that congress and the president can not abridge. The states also have rights and powers that can not be interfered with. The supreme court, for one thing, protects individuals and states in these rights and so it has been given the power to declare acts unconstitutional."

"In other words," said Mr. Miller, "that court is there to protect the people and the states against invasions on their rights and powers by what may be rampant legislative bodies."

"Exactly that," said Watson.

"But how often has the supreme court interfered in such a manner?" asked the chubby man.

"In 140 years it has set aside only 147 acts of congress," replied Watson.

"It isn't enough," suggested Mr. Miller. "The court ought to be impeached for not setting aside more."

"That is what a congressman told me," Watson said. "Congress often acts hastily or under undue pressure. It is often responsive to temporary public clamor. The five hundred and thirty-one men in the two houses can not always act deliberately. It is in every way proper that a supreme court composed of nine men who understand the law and the constitution should have the power of reviewing their work and setting aside their acts, and without such power we might soon have a mass of conflicting laws and general chaos."

"I should think so," said Mr. Miller.

"I may add also," Watson went on, "that in only nine of the 147 cases did the supreme court act through a mere majority opinion, that is, by a five to four vote of the judges."

"If the republicans are wise," said Mr. Miller, "they may well make the slogan, 'Save the supreme court,' their chief rallying cry."

"It is not only the court," said Watson, "but the rights of the people that we want to save. Under the La Follette proposals, the country would be turned over to congress. We all know enough about congress that in a time of unrest the radicals and extremists might elect enough of their kind to upturn the government itself. Freedom of speech and of religion, property rights, trial by jury and all the rest of the rights now guaranteed to the people by the constitution might be swept aside."

"It is a dangerous experiment they propose," said the chubby man.

"It is more than dangerous," said Watson. "It is revolutionary. It is socialistic in the extreme. It is preparing the way to change the whole system and structure of the American government. It might and it would reduce America to what they now have in Russia."

"The American people will never consent to such proposals," declared Mr. Miller.

"Let us hope they will not," said Watson. "And let us in this election make the verdict so strong that it will be final."

## CHAPTER XVIII

## WATSON MAKES A SPEECH

After many interruptions, Mr. Miller was at last able to present the guest of the evening, "Clarence Watson, newspaper writer and lecturer."

"Whenever I travel in what is called the Middle West, the lands of the Mississippi and Missouri," Watson began, "I think of the old Hebrew conception of an earthly paradise, a land flowing with milk and honey.

"You have everything here that the world needs as food, and the world needs everything you can produce. Some years you may seem to have too much of everything, but such problems, I believe, you can solve by orderly and, perhaps, coöperative marketing, and through the development of new industries.

"But population is increasing, and rest assured that land that will produce wheat and corn, and milk and honey will have a permanent and high value. It will never produce too much. There is more fear that it may not produce enough to feed the world.

"In these fertile valleys of the two great rivers, in this land of plenty, I realize you have passed through some hardships. Often you thought of yourselves as the only sufferers or as those who suffered most in the deflations and demoralizations that followed the war. You had your share of the hardships to bear, but remember that others also suffered, and some more than you, for at least you always had enough to eat.

"In your times of affliction, as has been said by others tonight, you received many would-be counsellors. The politicians came also. They go about like Satan, described in the book of Job. They promised you new laws for old evils. They had hasty cure-alls without limit.

"But do not believe all they promise you, and do not rely too much on mere laws. Some laws may help you, and others may only hinder you. Temporary legislative stimulations sometimes are no better than intoxications that are followed by suffering and remorse. Material salvation, like a spiritual salvation, is something that must be worked out. It can not be legislated in. Good laws are those that help you do that work under the fairest human conditions possible.

"But these facts have been so often stated that I will not undertake to re-state them now. Our friend, Jerry Jones, has already warned you against following Will-o'-the-wisps in politics, and our



venerable mentor, Mark Miller, has invoked the patience and the faith of Job through which he won back all that he had lost.

"I rejoice with you over the fact that you too seem to be getting back some of the things that have been lacking. The higher prices which you are now receiving for your products are not prices politically or financially manipulated, but they are based on world needs and movements. I belong to those who have to pay you these higher prices for our food. But we are willing to pay enough for our foods to enable you to produce them with a profit on your lands and out of your labor. That much the world owes you at all times.

"As an observer and commentator in Washington, I want to assure you that your government has at all times given diligent consideration not only to your problems but to all the problems of all the people. And in passing judgment none of us must think only of himself, unless it be of himself as a part of the whole people and the whole country. The national viewpoint is something that we must get back and that we must cherish.

"When what we call the Harding-Coolidge administration came into power conditions were chaotic. A nation wide deflation was under way. This began in the spring of 1920, almost a year before the 4th of March, 1921, when Mr. Harding was inducted into office. It would be unfair to say it was a deflation that the republicans inherited from the democrats. It was rather an inflation that the country inherited from the World War. I see nothing gained by the one blaming the other. In politics we should invoke fewer prejudices and seek more ardently to do those things that are right and just.

"But the country was in dire distress when Mr. Harding faced his national duties. The prices of products were down and still going down, and in the cities four or five million men were out of work and wages.

"President Harding called congress together and suggested procedures to set the country right. In rapid succession the congress passed what were called emergency bills. One was an emergency tariff bill to stop the flood of foreign goods under the then existing low tariff of the Wilson administration. The object was to let American labor be employed. Another was an emergency immigration bill, restricting the inflow of those who were coming to us from war afflicted Europe, adding only to our own unemployed population. The War Finance Corporation was revived to put money back into the rural sections of the country to save the

banks of the people from bankruptcies and to enable them to carry those who had become indebted to them, many of whom, if not most, were farmers.

"It was found that the debts and taxes of the war were heavy on the people. We were still collecting five and a half billions in taxes. Reductions in these burdens were imperative. The congress enacted a budget bill under which the expenditures of the government could be systematized and reduced. President Harding called on Mr. Charles G. Dawes to administer this new law. He called a big man to do a big work.

"Now as to the results:

"By autumn of that year, 1921, enough progress had been made to attract national attention. On the farms prices had gone up gradually and there was rejoicing when the price of corn again crossed 50 cents a bushel, and I use corn as simply typical, for corn even more than wheat has become in recent years a sort of market indicator.

"In the cities men were returning to work and by the spring of 1922 all the millions who had been idle were again earning wages, and they were undiminished wages.

"Under the budget system, the expenditures of the government were steadily reduced. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 1924, the appropriations were only \$3,497,000,000, as compared with \$5,538,000,000 the year before.

"Taxes paid by the people were reduced in like amounts, or nearly so. The republican congress in the summer of 1921 enacted a tax reduction law which reduced federal taxes approximately a billion dollars a year. Finding we had a surplus on hand, the last session of congress lopped off \$232,750,000 more in the form of a 25 per cent horizontal reduction in income taxes. In all, the tax reductions now amount to about \$1,250,000,000 a year.

"But in spite of these reductions in taxes, we have been reducing the national debt. The reductions in this debt, since the 4th of March, 1921, when the Harding-Coolidge administration began, have totaled \$3,070,442,686, and we still have a surplus in the treasury.

"Such is the record and such are the achievements of the three years and five months of the Harding-Coolidge administration and the man who is now carrying the great burden of the presidency is not permitting even a political campaign, in which he is a candidate for reelection, to interrupt his service to the people and the

nation. He is placing his duties and responsibilities above his personal aspirations.

"In conclusion, I am going to ask you the simple question, Are you going to rebuke with your votes in this election those who have served you so well in every way, or, are you going to say to them, 'well done, good and faithful servants,' we will let you serve us four years more."

## CHAPTER XIX

### MARY'S SPEECH

"Mary," said Mr. Miller, after the usual applause that followed Mr. Watson's speech, "I am going to let you have the last word in this meeting under our ancestral trees."

"I have been wondering," began Mary, somewhat timidly, "whether we have not been putting too much stress on merely material things. In nearly all the animated conversations which I have overheard here, and in all the speeches that have been made, you have talked of prices and products, of profits and prosperity. Under which political party can we make the most money?"

"Has this beautiful flag of ours that is now touched by the fading sunlight under these trees become the symbol of property only? Are prices and profits the proper measure of all the things we enjoy under this flag?"

"I know such things are important and necessary. But I am just wondering if there are not other things also that are important and necessary. Maybe we ought to be thinking and talking of morals as well as of money, and of spiritual things as well as of material ones. You know it was said long ago that man shall not live by bread alone. Sometimes I fear that we are making that mistake. As a nation are we not more prosperous than we are righteous? In always seeking more prosperity may we not be losing that righteousness which exalteth nations?"

"When I was helping nurse back to life and health many of the boys who had offered all they had on the altars of their country, I used to dream of a world made better by their sufferings and their sacrifices. I must confess that often since I have felt disappointed. My dreams and your dreams have not all been realized, and some have been shattered. So many of the old things have come back, and so many of the new ones have gone away again. I do not know just how to express myself, but I hope you understand what I mean.

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“Maybe you are wiser, or at least more so than I am, but you may be thinking that I am talking about things that are best in a woman’s life. But we women have what you men call a stake in this nation, and now we have a part to play which I hope no woman will neglect.

“A man, a mere man, asked me the other day why so many women seemed so deeply interested in Mr. Coolidge. I told him it was because we have found somewhere and somehow in him, in his utterances or in his actions, an expression of the moral and spiritual values of America. To me, I must confess, he stands for so many of the things which we have always associated with America, the America of our fathers and the America that we covet for our children. We do not want some other kind of America, one made over into the image of those who were not born of the spirit of our nation.

“Oh, friends, let us keep America American. Let us not permit anyone to make it over into something else and something less. Let it not be submerged in foreign propaganda, nor sunk in domestic greed.

“If there is aught wrong with America is it not of our own minds and hearts? There is abundant material health in it. Let us put into it, also moral and spiritual health. I sometimes fear we are almost too well off, and you know there was once a man who waxed fat and kicked.

“When I think of these things I feel like thanking God for Calvin Coolidge, for to me he seems the one man best fitted in his leadership to bring us back into harmony with the America that we have loved even unto this day and that we want to maintain and perpetuate as unsullied as the flag that floats over us.”

The approval that followed Mary’s speech was even more of the heart than of the hand.

“Friends,” said Mr. Miller, “I shall not seek to add any words to those that Mary has spoken — they are the best words and they have expressed the best thoughts for us to take home with us tonight. . . . So, in conclusion of our meeting, let us sing,

‘My country ’tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing. . . .’

“That’s all,” said Mr. Miller, when that was sung. “God bless you all, and God bless our country.”